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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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#108

THE SOUTHERN CRESCENT
AT BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
ON MAY 10. PHOTO: JACK FERRY.

ON THE COVER: Southern Railway's train No. 2, the SOUTHERN CRESCENT, was photographed by Jack Ferry at Birmingham, Alabama on May 10, 1975. On that date the train consisted of Southern diesels 6907, 6913 and 6906; and baggage-dorm 711, coaches 824 & 827, sleeper "Rapidan River," and coach-lounge 950. See page 17 for Pete Roehm and Dave Foley's account of a recent trip on SR's premier train.

LAST CALL FOR TRAIN RATINGS

So far there's been a tremendous response to our call for readers' ratings of American passenger trains, published in the last two issues. If you plan to send in your ratings and haven't yet done so, please do it now, and we will publish the results very soon in these pages. Please follow the instructions below.

1. In order to rate a train, you should have ridden it within the past seven months or been otherwise involved with it closely enough to feel certain of your ratings.
2. Rate as many trains as you wish, identifying each by name or number. Rate only U.S. passenger trains, Amtrak or non-, whether short distance, long distance, or corridor, but not commuter trains.
3. Judge the quality of the trains in each of the categories listed below:
   - A. Overall, taking everything into account.
   - B. Service from on-board personnel, except dining car crew.
   - C. Service from dining, snack or lounge crew.
   - D. The food offerred aboard the train.
   - E. Type of cars used on the train.
   - F. The route (e.g., would a different route in places be better?).
   - G. Station services along the route.
   - H. Track and roadbed.
   - I. Present scheduling of the train.
   - J. Train promotion--how well it's advertised or promoted.
4. For each train, list all 10 letters given above, and beside each put your rating on a scale from 1-9, with 1 = extremely poor, 5 = average, acceptable, and 9 = extremely good. Leave a blank beside any letter that you can't rate.
5. Do your ratings on a piece of paper or card separate from other correspondence. Add any comments you wish, and include your name and address and indicate whether we can use your name if we publish any of your comments.

The results will be tabulated and published in RTN as soon as possible.

Send your ratings to Rail Travel News,.Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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Our free introductory offer works this way: Send us a note mentioning this ad, and we'll send you free the next two issues of Rail Travel News off the press (you should get your first within 2 weeks). Bound in your first copy will be a bill for 24 more issues for $8, for a total of 26 including your two free examination copies. When you've examined your first two issues, return the bill with your remittance, or if you decide not to continue, merely return it marked "cancel" and we'll discontinue your subscription without further ado. Many readers like to send their check with their order. We appreciate that, and if you do, remember that your free examination and cancellation privilege still holds.

We're waiting to hear from you. Write today to:

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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $8.00 per year; single copy 35¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Malibu; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston. Mailing date this issue: May 27, 1975.

LETTERS

Glenn Lee's dome car article (last issue) conjures up some exciting possibilities for new Amtrak equipment. Contrary to what Amtrak claims, their "totally new" bi-levels are really just warmed over commuter cars and are not suitable for use on scenic routes. Rather than relying on one stark, utilitarian car design (such as the bi-levels) for long distance trains, they should give close consideration to Lee's suggestions and in the process give the public the type of train it really wants.

Charles A. Rudisel

White Bear Lake, Minnesota

I feel that Mr. G. Gerrish Williams's proposal (for a revived CZ--Second April issue) is the best I have read. This would give a thru transcontinental train which would both provide for vacation travel and for business travel east and west from Colorado and Utah points, and at the same time would make possible running the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR by the most direct route (UP from Omaha directly to Ogden instead of the time-consuming detour via Denver), thus cutting hours from its running time. It would also eliminate the need for a bus connection for RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR between Ogden and Salt Lake at an ungodly time of night.

John J. Bowman, Jr.

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Nice article on reviving the good old CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. Let's bring it back, including the fantastic Feather River segment.

Donald W. MacLean

Concord, California

The "revival" of the CZ discussed in the 1st May RTN would be desirable, but my opinion is that a train run between Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles via BN-D&RGW-UP-ATSF would be much better patronized and meet a much greater public need, especially now that the LAS VEGAS CELEBRITY TRAIN is apparently defunct. Glenn Lee points out the obvious imbalance of current West Coast-Chicago schedules, but fails to carry thru the implication that more Chicago-L.A. service is needed. Like it or not, Southern California is twice as big a potential market as the Bay Area, and needs better service to the east.

Glenn Lee's paean to the dome car was excellent. Amtrak is going to have to give its new trains some selling features if it wishes to move any closer to financial success, and the new trains now planned (about 3 bi-level coaches, a bi-level diner-lounge, and a bi-level sleeper) will be about as distinctive and individualistic as the average Chicagoland commuter run. For its own good, Amtrak should give serious thought to reshaping the form its consists will take in the future.

Mike Blaszak

Glenview, Illinois

I was distressed to find that (Amtrak's bi-level sleeper) design does not provide for a private toilet in each passenger's room. Sleeping cars have often been called "hotels on wheels," but in the 1970's the only hotels with communal toilets are flophouses on skid row... I have always preferred rail travel to other modes, but under no circumstances will I buy a sleeping car accommodation without an enclosed toilet. ... If Amtrak does introduce these rolling flophouses, I will have no choice but to turn to the airlines or my automobile for my travel needs.

Thomas E. Hoffman, Jr.

Washington, D. C.

I'll have to disagree with Glenn Lee on his plans for reviving the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, especially as this involves stripping the Eastern quadrant of the country of much needed equipment.

In setting priorities for new rail services, some thought must be given towards serving those areas of the country with the largest populations. Less favor

(continued on page 18)

NEW ENGLAND REPORT by Pete Roehm and Dave Foley

PETER I. ROEHM, Staff Correspondent for Rail Travel News, has been elected to the post of Chairman of the Citizens for Rail Transportation, a regional citizens' action group that seeks to secure better and more commuter rail services along with promoting intercity service and staying the elimination of light density branch lines until full studies can be made on them. Part of Roehm's proposal includes the establishment of individual task forces under the umbrella of CRT which will concentrate on separate areas of commuter rail, intercity, ConRail/branches, contract town liaison, legislative liaison, media development, etc. Any New England readers interested in becoming actively involved in securing passenger service in the region are invited to contact Pete.

READER BOB HALL from Exeter, NH invited this writer to a meeting of the NH-ARP recently that centered on the discussion of proposed Amtrak service between Boston and Portland. Present too was Sam Stokes, another RTN reader from Alstead, NH who has been very active in NH-ARP circles. Bob showed a letter from Alan Dustin, president of the B&M, where in the latter is very interested in handling the passenger service to Maine including that beyond just a Portland terminus. The B&M is currently gathering much data in regard to the aforementioned services.

B&M'S THIRD REFURBISHED Budd car, RDC-3 #6301, will be on the line shortly, and Dave Gunn, former ICG AVP and currently Director of MBTA Commuter Rail, says that it is really sharp, with the baggage floor looking more like a dance floor. The second car into service, #6135, an RDC-1, was on the Eastern line recently, and I caught it on the eleven at night run. The new interior paint gives a much brighter appearance, and the conductor was very happy with it. The commuter rail is slowly becoming known as the Lavender Line, with all of the humorous implications that this will bring, especially in an area with a very strong and visible gay population that has recently had carcards in the Green Line trolleys raising people's consciousness on their lifestyle and using a lavender rhino as the symbol. Most likely there will be several Lavender Line jokes making the rounds.

THE COUNTDOWN NEARS on the Rockport/Gloucester Branch service to the town of Rockport, MA with the Selectmen holding a special town meeting on May 20 to discuss this matter along with a proposed industrial park. This writer has requested of the MBTA that the newly refurbished cars be concentrated on the Gloucester Branch trains as D-day approaches, and Dave Gunn has agreed and yours truly will be working on the trains and days that the cars should be used to hopefully raise a few consciousnesses of town folk. Rockport Commuter Rail Action Project is active again.

B&M SUMMER SCHEDULES will bring some elimination of midday trains on the Eastern Route as major track work begins. There will be added weekend trains for the tourist traffic to Rockport and schedules will be lengthened eight to ten minutes as slow orders tend to occur due to construction.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Now four years old, Amtrak is a dismal failure. It is a giant (and growing) rat hole into which the government--which is to say, the taxpayer--is pouring hundreds of millions of dollars, with little prospect that the money will ever contribute significantly to solving either the nation's energy or transportation problem. ...the future of passenger trains is as dim now as it was then (in 1971)."

--Robert J. Samuelson in Los Angeles Times, May 13

"The authority's board voted this week to pay off indebtedness on the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike within the next two years and turn the tollway over to the stated!! as a free public road as soon as possible."

--New York Times, May 4

(Just give us the facts without getting hysterical.)

ANOTHER ENERGY CRISIS COMING?

A Federal Energy Administration official predicted on May 19 that the oil-producing countries will probably raise the price of oil by 10-15% in September. This would mean a jump from the current $10-11 per barrel to as much as $12.60 per barrel. There was speculation that the timing of the administration official's statement was related to the continuing inability of Congress to agree on an energy conservation measure.

RAIL PACKAGE LEGISLATION PROPOSED

President Ford's expected legislation to give railroads $2 billion in loans and reduce regulation of them was proposed to Congress late this month. In the first quarter of this year, the railroad industry as a whole had its first operating deficit in its history, but despite this, railroad executives are optimistic about the future. This optimism is reflected in a series of quotes presented in an editorial in Railway Age magazine May 12. Nearly all interviewed see signs of an economic upturn.

NEWS BRIEF: Amtrak's Nationwide Timetable, dated May 15, has appeared, tho it is apparently still in short supply at stations as we go to press. This is the first updated All-America Schedules since Nov. 15, 1974, and it may be Amtrak's handsomest. The cover carries a reproduction of part of a painting by Gil Reid made for Auto-Liner Corporation and printed on their 1975 calendar. The scene shows a Metroliner and a GE electric powered train in anevening scene at Metropark. (The full calendar picture includes a Turboliner and a round-end observation car viewed from the rear.) An innovation in this timetable is a 2-page schematic diagram of Amtrak's coast-to-coast routes, with arrival and departure times printed alongside the route at appropriate points..... University of Idaho trqnsportation expert Dr. Richard Day said this month that three routes thru Southern Idaho are being studied, one of which will be proposed to the DOT for the experimental route that it must designate for Amtrak by this coming June 30. All routes run Seattle-Portland-Boise-Pocatello, but from there one goes to Salt Lake, Las Vegas and Los Angeles; another runs to Salt Lake and Denver; the third goes to Green River, WY, where connections are made to the east..... The Portland Oregon Planning Commission is studying a "Union Center" at the present Union Station, with trains, buses, trolleys and boats all joining at that point..... Foreign rail tragedies: Nine persons were killed when two express trains hit headon at the Norrkoping Station in Sweden on May 15. A train derailed at Sidi Yahia Du Rharb near Rabat, Morocco May 22, killing at least 46 persons. A train hit a gasoline truck near Tarbes, France on May 22, killing 6 people..... Southern Railway trains 7 & 8, the daily mixed train between Washington and Lynchburg, saw their last runs on May 22. The other trains that Southern has asked to drop or cut back will continue running as normal at least thru the summer, a report says..... Amtrak announced this month a "Colonial Corridor" ticket to start Sept 8 and run thru 1976, except for peak times, to celebrate the Bicentennial. The promotional ticket offers 30% fare reductions from current Boston-Washington coach fares..... A derailment on UP at Evanston, WY caused the detour of train 5, the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, early on May 21. The detour went from Granger to Ogden via McCammon, Idaho, and got the train to its Oakland end point 10 hours late (12:30am on May 22). In mid-May the SOUTHWEST LIMITED was detoured on SP between L.A. and Mojave when Cajon Pass was blocked by a UP derailment on Santa Fe tracks..... The SP Daylight Engine that will power the Freedom Train on the western part of its tour was dedicated formally May 16 in Portland, Oregon.....

AMTRAK'S COMMUNICATIVE PRESIDENT

Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup prepares to board the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR at Oakland, April 4. Photo by Message Media.

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His latest talk was to the Women's National Republican Club of Chicago on May 23, and we quote:

"When a little less than three months ago I took a considerable loss in salary and accepted the job as president of one of the more controversial organizations in the world of transportation, there were those who thought I was--to put it mildly--ill-advised. Others were more blunt. They thought I was off my rocker. Why should I leave a good job in a wonderful city like Chicago to take a lower-paying, tough position in Washington where throwing rocks at glass houses is a way of life?

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"Why did I jcin Amtrak? Basically because Amtrak is doing a job that needs to be done...because we need rail passenger transportation in this country...and Amtrak appears the only chance to save it. I'm going to do my darndest.

"Amtrak is a unique creation: A corporation with access to public credit, operating on private property; it is an innovation and an experiment. It is a challenge to create a balanced transportation system alongside the great air and highway systems which already exist. We all recognize that the fuel crisis has taught us we can no longer rely totally upon the internal combustion engine and upon aircraft for limitless transport means. Eighty-seven percent of the intercity transportation in this country is still carried out by automobile. Amtrak has as its goal the essential reduction of this fuel-consuming burden.

"The railroad is more energy-effective than any other transportation mode, and its ascendancy in the next decade will do much to bring about the reduction of the use of petroleum products and to assure the goals of Project Independence. Rail transportation must be considered as the wave of the future. With the help, concern and understanding of those of you here and of all Americans, Amtrak could very well ride the crest to evermore effective public service."

Reistrup went on to summarize Amtrak's accomplishments and problems to date, which readers know well. Then he continued: "Before too long, Amtrak will have to decide, under the terms of our congressional mandate, whether to purchase or lease the track from Washington to Boston. This will be a major milestone. We already have begun some track improvement work north of New York. Track becomes a more pressing problem for Amtrak each passing day, especially in the Northeast and Midwest on the bankrupt railroads. And with the problems of the Rock Island, the 'Northeast railroad problem' now stretches to Tucumcari, New Mexico. It is a national problem.

"Americans have become accustomed to very high standards for highway construction as well as for air travel, and nothing less than a comparable standard for passenger rail service can be considered acceptable. The increasing need for intercity travel capability--not the least of which is caused by fuel shortages past and future--creates an urgent requirement for improved rail passenger service as a viable and significant alternative to the private automobile, the bus and the airplane.

"...I have been with Amtrak since the first of March; this is not quite 3 months. Since then I have ridden over 30 Amtrak trains. I have traveled over 7000 miles on all parts of our system. I have talked with hundreds of our crew members and passengers. I have inspected cars and equipment. I have eaten our food. (By the way, it's good food at reasonable prices.) I have met with railroad presidents whose cooperation and assistance are absolutely essential to our success. I have held over 25 press interviews and I have been on Capitol Hill to talk about Amtrak with dozens of Congressmen, I should say to talk and listen. I am not 'ignoring' one single thing about rail passenger service; not complaints, not suggestions, not mistakes and certainly not the welfare of our passengers.

"This is one hell of a big job, and it will not be done in 3 months nor even 3 years. But I will tell you, and I will tell newsmen and will tell Congressmen, that big as the job is, I intend to see that it is done. But I am not going to be able to do it by myself. I would be less than frank, less than truthful and less than understanding if I if I ever thought that I could. It took over 25 years for the rail passenger system to get in the poor shape it was in when Amtrak took over, and it will take a long time to correct all of that.

"And it is because I am not ignoring the complaints that I am able to know how many problems there are and how big the task before us is. I ask for help in this job. I want help from everyone in my company. I want help, guidance and assistance from the railroads. I want help from Congress and from the news media. And I need help from you...from all Americans who realize that the welfare of the rail system is tied up vitally with the welfare of this country.

"...I am not going to ask you to ride our trains just to save fuel. I am not going to ask you to ride our trains just because you have to, or because you do not have any other alternative. I want you to ride Amtrak's trains because you want to, because they are safe, because they are comfortable, because they are on-time and because you would rather ride them than to take your car. And to do that I must make sure that they are safe, comfortable, clean and on-time. This is my job as I see it. I have accepted this challenge."

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"...I am not going to ask you to ride our trains just to save fuel. I am not going to ask you to ride our trains just because you have to, or because you do not have any other alternative. I want you to ride Amtrak's trains because you want to, because they are safe, because they are comfortable, because they are on-time and because you would rather ride them than to take your car. And to do that I must make sure that they are safe, comfortable, clean and on-time. This is my job as I see it. I have accepted this challenge."

In an interview with Railway Age (May 12 issue), Reistrup said that his top priorities are improving and speeding up Amtrak's response to the needs of its passengers; improving car maintenance; and improving track. When asked for his view of what Amtrak should be doing by 1990, Reistrup replied that it should be concentrating on corridor operation with a "reliable, skeletal long-distance service." Concerning long distance "cruise trains," Reistrup seemed ambivalent, saying he felt now that he was not inclined toward running them around the country, but admitted that "we may do that." He suggested an alternative--having "someone else" handle the cruise trains on a contract basis. ("Maybe that's the way to handle people who want to ride around the world in a stateroom.") Reistrup said he is a "great believer" in local initiative, as required for 403-b operations. He said that Amtrak is now drawing up firm guidelines for working with states that want to initiate local services.

The magazine listed routes that are now under discussion or in the planning stage: Boston-Chicago (to start in September), Washington-Denver, Chicago-Green Bay, Chicago-Madison, Chicago-Toronto, and Los Angeles-San Diego (augmented service).

CARS AND CONSISTS

The table below shows consists of Amtrak trains mostly on the Detroit run. The table was compiled by Dave Korkhouse of Niles, Michigan.

DATE	TRAIN #	ENGINE #	CAR #
1/2	364	330 332	5402 5802 4510 3811
1/2	362	349 323	4710 6058 6024 4446 8112 5644 5457
1/2	363	312	6030 6015 6049 8354 6028
1/3	364	311 310	6068 5654 5647 3242 3370
1/3	362	321 312	1074 5237 4447 8354 6049 6015 6030 6053 3970
1/10	362	321 313	1710 4510 6016 8113 4557 5611 3871
1/10	363	314	3203 4446 8112 5644 4409
1/12	360	311	8113 4557 5611 3871
1/12	365	203 323	3926 6447 6014
1/12	361	310	3682 4409 5644 8112 4446
1/16	364	310 321	5318 5256 8354
1/16	362	311	1168 3361 4557 6029 3871
1/26	360	318	4557 5259 8113 3871
1/26	365	312 316	5660 3926 5429
1/26	361	314	1710 6069 6022 497 5237 6011
2/2	363	308	Silver Shaft, 4563 5454 5237 897
2/6	362	312	1710 Silver Shaft, 4563 5454
2/6	363	313	3870 6014 5253 497
2/9	364	308	3921 6016 5261
2/20	362	322	3682 3902 4596 4535 3871
2/22	392	203 205	6031 6004 3362 5417 5454
2/22	59	616 615	1108 1420 9210 8116 4852 4820 3801 4505 4892
2/23	391	618	6031 6004 3362 5417 5454
2/27	363	322	497 5237 5614 6014 6053
3/5	363	319	3871 4535 4598 8112
3/21	363	319	3870 4563 4596 8354
3/22	365	323	5658 7001 5454 3921
3/22	361	402	1710 5683 5614 6049 4601 4401
3/27	363	233	3870 6025 4596 5606 3721
3/29	365	430	8382 5657 4820 6032 4853
3/29	361	233 247	6006 3921 5606 4596 6025 3870
4/5	365	322	6011 5400 3926
4/5	361	314 233	1600 5804 6810 6048 3902 6032 5417 Silver Shaft
4/19	360	427 318	6002 5605 5698 3801
4/20	364	318	5661 3926 4405 6050
4/20	362	226	5642 6022 5605 5698 3801
4/24	363	233	3870 3329 5605 6033
4/26	365	316	3871 6810 3811
4/26	361	224	4562 6022 5605 3229 3870
4/27	360		65 85 64 80 84*
4/27	364	316	3242 6059 6048 6030
4/27	352	319	4562 5605 3329 3870
4/27	354	224	3811 6810 3871
4/27	355		84 80 64 85 65*

*Turboliner

A May Sojourn

by David Osborne

A CANADIAN RAIL TRAVELER TAKES OFF ON NORTH AMERICA'S LONGEST RDC RUN

May 24, 1974 arrived bright and sunny in Winnipeg--a welcome relief from the overcast sky and rain which had plagued Manitoba all spring. 8:00 A.M. found me under the dome of the magnificent CN station all set to begin a weekend jaunt to Thunder Bay, Ontario and back. A glance at the trainboard showed me that #2, the SUPER CONTINENTAL from Vancouver was late again and would not arrive until 9:65, an hour after train 686 was to begin its tri-weekly 11-hr, 438 mile run to Thunder Bay.

Passengers off #2 and bound for Thunder Bay would not make their connection today, as Railiner 686 was called to depart on time. After showing my ticket to the gatekeeper, I climbed the stairs to my train parked on track 1 of the enclosed train shed. "Where is my train?" I thought as I reached the head of the stairs and gazed at the equipment stored in the station. At this point I was directed down the track some 300 feet where were parked RDC-4 #6475 and RDC-1 #6108. "Why" I wondered, "wouldn't CN store equipment on another track and eleminate the extra walk for its passengers?"

The car toads were inspecting the undersides of the short train as I climbed aboard and found my way to a seat. Once aboard it was obvious that RDC #6108 had been refurbished for this assignment, as it was fitted with 90 reclining but non-reversible seats that faced each other. This eliminates the need to reverse the seats at the end of the run but means half the seats are always facing backwards. Eight other passengers boarded and at 8:30 (15 minutes late) the longest RDC run (438 mi.) in North America began.

We were off, rocking across the Red River through the east end suburbs of Winnipeg, slowing to a crawl as we passed CN's giant Symington marshalling yard and then out on the flat prairie farmland. Within an hour we were travelling through the pine forests of the Sandilands Provincial Forest. Approximately 115 miles out of Winnipeg we stopped at the U.S.-Canada border. At this point the railway line runs near the highway, and the U.S. customs official walked across from the highway inspection point to take tally of the train passengers. As no passengers were destined for U.S. points, we were quickly on our way again, running along the south shore of the Lake of the Woods and pausing at the resort towns of Warroad and Baudette, Minnesota.

After a 40-mile run through northern Minnesota, we re-entered Canada at Rainy River, Ontario. Although it's not listed as such in the timetable, Rainy River is a 30-minute meal stop. On this day the Canadian Customs officer was late in arriving at the station, and so everyone had to sit on the train for 15 minutes awaiting his arrival.

Since the railiners were placed on this route a few years ago, there is no food service available, so I took this opportunity to eat the lunch that I had brought along.

Soon it was 12:30 and we were off again heading for the lumber town of St. Frances, 55 miles away. It is at St. Frances that the DW&P branches off towards Duluth. Several DW&P locomotives were sitting in the St. Frances year awaiting assignments south.

We were now traveling through the beautiful Canadian Shield, with its seemingly limitless forests and hundreds of beautiful lakes and rivers. From time to time we passed both east and westbound freights in the hole, allowing our short train with now only six passengers to proceed without interruption. In conversation with the conductor, I learned that today's load was light indeed, and often all seats are sold.

About 25 miles before Thunder Bay, the route became double-tracked as we joined the CN branch from Sioux Look -out to Thunder Bay. At about this time on the other side of the river the mainline double tracks of the CPR became visible.

Around a point of land, and there it was--Canada's chief grain port, Thunder Bay, or what used to be the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur. We slowed for the shelter at Thunder Bay and then on for the final 3.8 miles to tie up at Thunder Bay North (formally Port Arthur) and my 11-hour, 438.3-mile journey was over.

Hauling my suitcase, I crossed the tracks, walked by the CPR Port Arthur station that had been closed only a month before, and trundled up the hill to the Prince Arthur hotel, where I obtained a room overlooking both rail -way stations and beautiful Lake Superior.

Sunday dawned sunny and warm, a perfect day to observe the harbour-front rail activities before returning -ing to Winnipeg. As train time near -ed how I wished that I could board the CPR's CANADIAN at the station in front of my hotel rather than taking a bus 5 miles across town to the main station. If CP found it uneconomic to maintain two stations in Thunder Bay, surely they could have reduced costs and kept up the service by turn -ing the Thunder Bay North station into a flag stop only.

Mid-afternoon found me at CP's main Thunder Bay station, awaiting the arrival of the CANADIAN to return me to Winnipeg. Sitting in the station was the business car "Laurentian" which waiting to be attached to the CANADIAN. This car will spoil the view for those in the observation car, I thought, but a switchman informed me that the "Laurentian" would be coupled next to the engine instead.

Suddenly I saw a headlight down the tracks, and here was the CANADIAN arriving 10 minutes early. But no, it stopped just east of the station for re-fueling, and this task complet -ed, pulled up to the station right on the advertised.

On this afternoon the CANADIAN con -sisted of two F units, a baggage-dorm, two coaches, the coach-skyline coffee shop, a sleeper, diner, two more sleep -ers, and finally the dome-sleeper observation car. The train seemed to be well patronized for this time of year, and as soon as the "Laurentian" was tucked behind the engines, we were off down the right-hand track of CP's double-tracked main line heading for Winnipeg, 420 miles and 8 hours away.

I settled down in a dome seat in the skyline coffee shop to relax and enjoy the trip home. One often hears of CP's desire to get out of the passenger business, but one would never know it by the way the CANADIAN is operated. The train operates much smoother and quieter than CNs SUPER CONTINENTAL. Soft recorded music is piped throughout the train, and the conductor used the PA system to announce station stops along the way.

The trip was uneventful and arrival in Winnipeg was 20 minutes late. We would have arrived on time, but east of Winnipeg we were switched onto the east bound track due to spring floodi -ing. As CP's mailine is signaled for one direction only, this meant rather slow running for about 10 miles until we were switched back to the westbound track.

All in all the trip amounted to an enjoyable spring outing that will be remembered for some time to come.

PAGE 10
CP RAIL'S CANADIAN AT WEST TORONTO. 10/73.

PAGE 11 PHOTO: FRED MATTHEWS.

Rail Canada

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Mixed Train of Thoughts

CONCERNING OUR NEW printing: rest assured that it is not our intention to produce faintly printed blue pages that can only be read with 20-20 vision and a powerful magnifying glass. The problems you've seen thus far were the bugs we mentioned. What you should be seeing very shortly is markedly improved photographic reproduction in most cases, a jazzier-appearing magazine with rich, deep colors and uniformly clear printing. (Our main problem was that the equipment we inherited was allowed to deteriorate for 25 years and can't be restored overnight. All we ask is a little patience.)..... FOR TIMETABLE COLLECTORS: the complete list of spring schedules issued by Amtrak is: (Apr. 27) Northeast; West Coast, NY-Washington; Washington-NY-Montreal; NY-Boston; Chicago-Houston-New Orleans & St. Louis-Laredo; Florida; NY-Albany-Buffalo-Detroit; Chicago-California; Chicago-Seattle; NY-Washington-Sunset Route. (May 10) Midwest. (May 15) All-America Schedules..... THAT DOME OBSERVATION pictured on some of Amtrak's spring timetable covers is an accurately detailed reproduction of former WP CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR car "Silver Planet," and thereby hangs an interesting tale. The car happens to be the favorite car of Amtrak timetable man Bruce Heard. It was purchased from WP by the little Oregon Pacific & Eastern Railway, and was recently sold to the Southern California agency that is planning augmented San Diego-L.A. service. The latest word is that Amtrak is going to obtain the tail car from the commuter agency by trading them a high-capacity chaircar for it, which would be more useful for commuting purposes..

* * *

AMTRAK HAS SIGNED on a new advertising agency: Needham, Harper and Steers, to replace Ted Bates, its agent since 1971. NH&S carries a number of large advertisers, including (as Railway Age pointed out) the McDonald hamburger chain ..... AMTRAK'S ON-TIME PERFORMANCE for April was 77.0% systemwide, down from the 77.7% of March. Long distance was 76.4 (up from 69.0 in March), short distance 79.7, Metroliners 69.5, Turboliners 73.2 and TurboTrains 53.6. Among the high scorers was Chicago-Seattle with 97.7. The BROADWAY and the NATIONAL LIMITED both achieved goose eggs..... AMTRAK'S RIDERSHIP FIGURES for March were down from the high month of March 1974, as we reported earlier. There was a drop on every route. The fall-offs were fairly uniform, with no really huge losses on any given route. The smallest loss was on the COAST STARLIGHT, with a drop of just 4%, while the only increase noted was a 2% rise in first class passengers on the SUNSET LIMITED, altho overall the SUNSET lost 22% of its ridership from a year earlier. Let's take that back: there was also an 88% rise in first class riders NY/Washington-Chicago, tho overall the drop was 14% on that route. Highest route losses were 51% each on the SAN JOAQUIN and the INTER-AMERICAN..... AMTRAK'S SYSTEMWIDE REORGANIZATION is getting underway. There will be four regions (northeast, southeast, central and western), each under a Vice President, and each with far more autonomy than before. Each regional VP will be in charge of local sales, service (both on-board and in stations), and maintenance. He will report to a coordinator in Washington. One of the benefits of the new system, which is Paul Reistrup's first major visible change in the administration of Amtrak, will be that local people can make decisions about such things as emergency changes in train consists without waiting for approval from Washington. No names have been announced yet for the posts of regional V.P.(s.....

* * *

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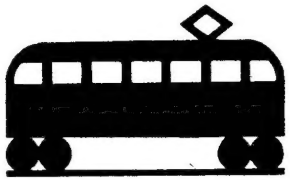
Urban-Suburban Transit



MIAMI'S TRANSIT SYSTEM now being planned got the last of 8 reports from Kaiser engineers early this month. The 48-mile elevated system can carry 443,000 passengers daily by 1985, running 20 hours per day, with trains 3 minutes apart during rush hours. The north-south line, the first to be built, is expected to have the heaviest traffic. Construction will hopefully begin next year provided that federal and state funds needed are available by then.

GREYHOUND LINES ADVERTISES in college newspapers an Ameripass, for unlimited travel, for $87.50, "half the regular price." The regular price of $175 pays for a one-month pass. The new promotion, which was for the period only thru May 31, was for a 15-day ticket.

THE TRANSRAPID 04, a magnetically levitated rail vehicle, made its first public run on a test track at Munich, Germany on May 14. The 250mph top speed vehicle is designed by Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Krauss-Maffei syndicate.

DEMAND-RESPONSIVE TRANSPORTATION (dial-a-bus) will be the topic of a conference on March 15-17 next yearat Sheraton-Park Hotel in Washington. August 1 is the d3adline for papers to be submitt3d to the 6th annual international conference. Info from Hugh M. Gillespie, 2101 Constitution Ave., Washington DC 20418.

DIAL-A-RIDE died in San Jose, CA this month, less than half a year after its Nov. 24, 1974 inaugural. The 25¢ demand-responsive bus experiment, 15 times larger than any similar system anywhere else in America, was dropped because the demand for its services was too great for the finances of the city to bear, in the judgment of city officials.

FRANK C. HERRINGER, former head of UMTA who takes over as head of BART July 1 had his resignation accepted by President Ford April 24. Ford expressed "sincere gratitude" for his "dedicated service to our nation."

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION William T. Coleman Jr. announced on April 29 a grant of $2,870,068 to the Delaware Authority for Regional Transit (DART) in Wilmington for the purchase of new buses and equipment. On April 21 the DOT Secretary announced a $600 million commitment, subject to Congressional action, to MARTA, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, which combined with nearly $200 million in grants already, would bring total federal aid to almost $800 million in Atlanta to help in construction of its new rapid transit system.

A TROLLEY LINE to be built from First Hill to Seattle's downtown and waterfront, was recommended on April 30 by the city's Transportation Committee. The city has had no east-west public transportation since the early 1960's.

AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE SALES in May reached their lowest level in 17 years, off 21% from May of 1974. They were slightly below the April figure as well.

A FEDERAL COURT ruled this month that the Erie-Lackawanna must continued its Cleveland commuter service, deciding that a lower court ruling in 1973 was invalid. The railroad says it loses $150,000 yearly on the Youngstown-Cleveland run.

CLEVELAND AREA VOTERS will decide next July 22 to accept a 1% county sales tax to finance mass transportation. A guaranteed 25¢ fare for three years is part of the package to lure voters into acceptance of the tax. On May 12 the Cleveland Transit System was formally transferred to the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

THE CRESCENT IS STILL SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

by Pete Roehm and Dave Foley

Getting to Southern Railway's Peachtree Station in suburban Brookwood offers no problem to anyone arriving at the Hartsfield International Airport well to the south (and opposite end) of town, as we did on Sunday May 4. Our Delta L-1011 from Orlando settled down rather smoothly and we hustled quickly to a limo that would take us to the Riviera Hyatt House, just over a block from the station and for a fare of but $2.50 each. All would-be CRESCENT fans make a note of that should you be flying into Atlanta to catch it northbound.

The Peachtree station is a most attractive small red brick station pleasing in design and surrounded on three sides by trees and greenery. There is a courtyard with a statue of one Mr. Spencer and much well-groomed bush and beige-toned peastone walkways. A soft breeze blows thru the outside waiting area which allows full view to the south for approaching trains.

About an hour before Number 2's arrival, four E units for the north run are brought in by a switcher and kept on the other side of the highway. At 6:40pm on the dot, Number 2 arrived with three E's and four cars including two sleepers. Much activity commenced as another switcher brought in our sleeper, "Yadkin River," plus the diner and lounge units. The train was due out at 7pm, and it so responded at 7:00 on the dot. When the CRESCENT is off schedule it is known that someone had better have a damn good reason why or Claytor will be on the phone.

After a moment's relaxation and a brew or two, we adjourned to the diner to find tablecloths, genuine flowers, and a pleasant and friendly staff. A mutual friend, Paul Morrissey, of Foxboro, MA was already seated and we joined him at his table. He had been on the 4501 trip that weekend at Columbus, MS and we were both surprised to see each other at dinner. Our dinner selections were excellent (hot turkey and roast beef) and the service outstanding. We spent a good hour or two over dessert and coffee conversing on many aspects of rail activity.

We then returned to our bedroom accommodation and celebrated our presence with a fifth of champagne and relaxed a long while before calling the porter to turn the beds down. As the train rolled on, we noted that it was usually early into most stations; there was some rough riding at a few points, but not very often. A good, if brief, sleep and then up for breakfast.

Paul was already at the table when we arrived and thus sat down to eggs, omelet, coffee, et al, plus a complimentary copy of the Washington Post (a regular service of the Southern) with a sticker to that effect at the top. The Southern also has packets of goodies in each room that include a story of the CRESCENT, decals, post cards, luggage tag, and other booklets. Even the airlines aren't this generous! We couldn't linger that long over breakfast, as Pot Yard and Alexandria were coming up on us. We arrived at Union Station ten minutes early.

The CRESCENT is still SOUTHERN hospitality.

NOTES ON DOMES

***Altho B&O and Penn Central have not allowed occupied dome cars to be operated under trolley wire in electrified zones, both GN and Milwaukee Road operated dome cars under energized trolley wire with no apparent difficulties. The EMPIRE BUILDER domes operated 1955-56 under GN's trolley, which extended from Wenatchee to Skykomish, WA, about 75 miles in distance. Milwaukee Road operated its full-length Super Dome cars under some 660 miles of trolley, from Harlowton, MT to Avery, ID; and from Othello, WA to Seattle; and thence backwards to the system's western terminal in Tacoma. One Super Dome was damaged by fire in the Montana Rockies in the mid-1950's when an energized trolley came down on the dome following a derailment. The car was repaired and returned to service afterwards.

***Icicle breakers on locomotives pulling dome trains are a necessity. An EMPIRE BUILDER dome coach operating eastbound between Portland, OR and Pasco, WA was dam-

aged by an icicle of excessive length in a tunnel near Bonneville Dam. Both panes of glass in a forward window panel were knocked out, and a number of passengers were injured in this wintertime accident which took place in the late 1960's.

***New York Central and Santa Fe had worked out a preliminary plan for a thru transcontinental passenger train in the early 1950's, which involved operating the SUPER CHIEF Los Angeles to Grand Central in New York City. The Pleasure Dome loung car was to be switched from the train eastbound at Buffalo, and inserted in the con sist westbound. When NYC control went to Robert Young and Al Perlman, the plan was dropped.

LETTERS (continued from page 3)

should be given to the vast empty reaches of rock, cactus and coyotes. A quick glance at a population density map of the U.S. shows that the greatest concentrations lie at the Boston-to-Washington axis and along the Great Lakes. These are precisely the areas in which rail service is most badly deteriorated in relation to what was once available. The Eastern roads beginning in the early 1950's drove off millions of rail passengers with high fares and terrible service. Ultimately this Northeast quadrant of states must have their rail passenger service built back up to a high level if the rest of the country is to have decent rail service. Where are the long distance passengers for the West to come from if not from here?

Before even considering such extravaganzas as revived CZ-type trains, it would be well to put what equipment that can be mustered to work on these more vital routes. Some examples: a day train over the route of the BROADWAY, a Pittsburg to Washington train via B&O, Detroit to Cincinnati and numerous others such as more short routes out of Chicago. Even the states of the Confederacy are more deserving of attention than the CZ. We need a Midwest to Atlanta train, the revival of the route of the PAN AMERICAN, the GULF WIND route and others.

Here in the East, money spent on new train routes results in more serious travel needs being met. In these areas millions could use the trains in a practical way to meet real personal and business travel needs. Let's reorder our priorities and put the domeliner sagebrush specials low down on the list.

Robert van Wormer

Jacksonville, Alabama

Glenn Lee's rambling discourse on domes and Zephyrs was a fantasy... I was embarrassed to read it... he suggests that residents of my state shouldn't mind riding in P-70 coaches... I read RTN enthusiastically, but this is trash.

Charles Landey

Detroit, Michigan

In regard to the restroom revolt that is being voiced relative to the bi-level sleeping cars, the solution may lie somewhere in between. Fitting a high-level sleeper with plumbing in every room might well prove to be an engineering nightmare whereas the elimination of such amenities completely obviously clashes with a public demand.

It is suggested that somewhat larger and more comfortable rooms with toilet facilities be provided on the lower floor of the new bi-level sleeping cars where plumbing can be more conveniently installed with somewhat more spartan accommodations on the upper floor with a reasonable number of community rest rooms.

The older clientele will have greater demand for the better accommodations, more ability to pay the price differential, and less desire to contend with the step climbing to the upper floor. The upper floor accommodations with their simpler appointments would probably come to be regarded more as the couchette accommodations are in Europe, where they are apparently successful and accepted.

M. D. Monaghan

Garland, Texas

Express Ads

COLORFUL COLORADO HOLIDAY one-week escorted tour from San Francisco & Sacramento by private GWT pullman & lounge cars attached to Amtrak's S. F. ZEPHYR. Comprehensive Colorado sightseeing includes D&RGW's SILVERTON and RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR. Three departures: June 7 & 28, Aug. 23. Brochure on this and other rail tours available from GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, San Francisco 94105.

Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, Georgia Southern & Florida & Lackawanna Uniform Buttons 70¢ each or all three $2.00. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

"STEAMY"-FOR YOUNG RAIL ENTHUSIASTS! "Steamy" is a locomotive on the old D&RGW narrow gauge, now the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. 28 pages to color plus an exciting story will give children a feeling for Rocky Mountain Railroading as it was. $1.75 - David Ulmer, 1407 Holmes Dr., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909.

INDEPENDENCE LIMITED III will operate behind 4501 July 3 Knoxville-Norton, VA thru Natural Tunnel, July 4 Norton-Roanoke via Bluefield, July 5 circle trip out of Roanoke, July 6 Roanoke-Alexandria. Also psgr extra to Knoxville departing Roanoke after Mountaineer arrives from west on July 2nd (limited). Write RNRH, P. O. Box 681, Roanoke, VA 24004 or call (703) 366-5211 or 366-2169.

YOU'RE INVITED: TWO RAILFAN FUN-TRAINS: #1 MEXICO (Jan 17-Feb 2) Mexico City, Veracruz (streetcars), Oaxaca, Puebla, Trip of Thousand Wonders. #2 WINTER SNOW (Feb 17-March 6) 8191 miles, Moffat Tunnel, Donner Pass, Rogers Pass, Cross Canada in Winter, Montreal, Adirondack, New York City, Philadelphia--write for details: MIDWEST TRAVEL SERVICE, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City, OK 73110.

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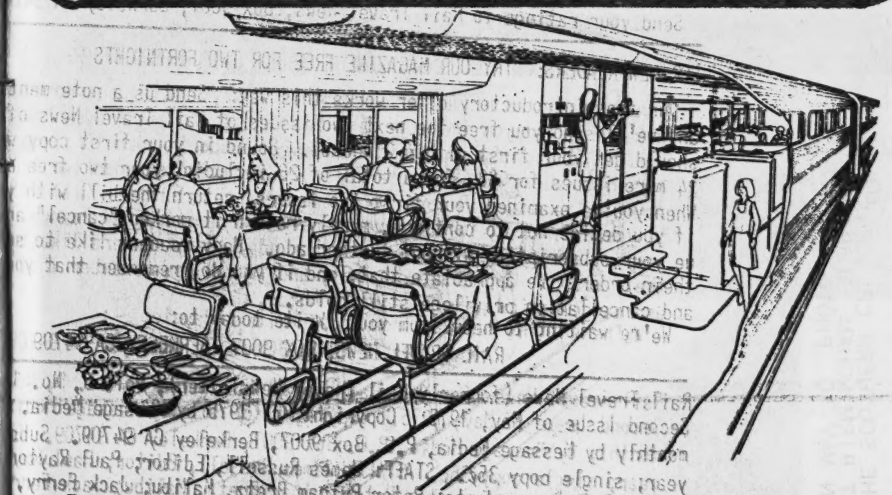

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